

The DSSR Allowances



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Agenda

We will cover—

- ❑ Allowances for U.S. Government employees under the *Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)*—DSSR
 - ❑ Most of the DSSR allowances—not a complete treatment; others will present on the DSSR's education allowances, educational travel, and evacuation payments, so those are omitted here
 - ❑ Slides roughly follow temporal order in which allowances arise in a foreign tour of assignment.





Foreign Allowances under the Standardized Regulations (DSSR)





Scope of the DSSR

- Derived from statute, the DSSR is a Government-wide “menu” of foreign allowances and benefits that agencies have the authority either to offer, or not to offer, their employees.
- Agencies also have authority to restrict eligibility for any DSSR allowance by means of their own implementing regulations. **An agency’s rules on DSSR allowances are the last word.** The Foreign Affairs Manual is an example of this for State.
- The DSSR is for foreign allowances and benefits what GSA’s Federal Travel Regulation is for travel.



Foreign Transfer Allowance (DSSR 240)




Helps to defray an employee's costs to
transfer to a post in a foreign area

Has four portions:

- Miscellaneous Expense
- Pre-departure Subsistence Expense
- Lease Penalty Expense
- Wardrobe Expense





FTA Miscellaneous Expense Portion (DSSR 242.1)

- Lump sum of \$650 without family or \$1300 with family; or one may itemize allowable expenses, with receipts, against ceiling higher than applicable flat amount
 - Itemize against one week's salary or that of GS-13/10 (whichever is less) when without family, or two weeks' worth of either (whichever is less) when with family





FTA Pre-Departure Expense Portion (DSSR 242)

- Up to ten days of subsistence anywhere in the U.S. prior to departure for foreign post*
- Basis is per diem rate of the U. S. post from which employee is transferring
- Final departure must be made from the losing U.S. post
- Two claim methods: Partial Flat Rate and Total Actual Subsistence* (method available is up to each agency)



FTA Lease Penalty and Wardrobe Portions (DSSR 242)



- Lease Penalty: Per terms of lease, or three months' rent, whichever is less
 - Employee to show due diligence: five criteria to meet (242.4)
- Wardrobe: Transfer must be from zone 1 to zone 3, or vice versa, to qualify (we publish transfer zones online)
 - Flat amounts based on family size (DSSR 242.2b)





Advance of Pay (DSSR 850)

- Up to three months' basic pay preceding, or on, arrival at a foreign post, or in certain medical emergencies outside the U.S.
- Implementing agency sets repayment rules and schedules. (State: 18 pay periods max, per 4 FAH-3 H-536)





TQSA on Arrival (DSSR 120)

- Reimburses temporary lodging, meals, laundry/dry cleaning in a foreign location on arrival/departure when Government-furnished quarters are unavailable
(this is the foreign-post subsistence piece of the two DSSR transfer allowances)
- On arrival: up to 90 days, with another 60 if approved by the employing agency
- Based upon per diem rate for the foreign post; reimbursement reduces over time



Living Quarters Allowance

(DSSR 130)



- Where **no** USG-owned or -leased permanent housing is provided for employees at no charge, a Living Quarters Allowance can be granted for the rental of privately leased quarters
- To reimburse the cost of “suitable, adequate living quarters” at a foreign post
- Amount can vary with family size at post
- Maximum annual rates published by quarters group (2, 3, 4) based on grade/rank/family size (quarters group tables at DSSR 135.2)





Post (Cost of Living) Allowance (DSSR 220)

- To reimburse employees for added expense of serving at a high-cost post
- A percentage of *spendable income* by salary level **AND** family size (*not* entire salary)
- Based upon post's Retail Price Survey and comparison to prices in Washington, DC






Separate Maintenance Allowance (DSSR 260)

- Reimburses the employee for the extra cost of maintaining a separate household away from the employee's foreign post
- Three types:
 - Involuntary: Family members not permitted at post
 - Voluntary: Family chooses to reside elsewhere
 - Transitional: Short-term subsistence “bridge” for family in certain situations
- Rates for SMA: DSSR 267.1





Hardship Differential/ Danger Pay (DSSR 500/530 and 650)

- Post Differential: For significant hardship conditions compared with those in U.S.
- Danger Pay: For service where civil war, insurrection, terrorism or war threaten physical harm or imminent danger to the employee.
- Percentage of basic salary; taxable.



Hardship Differential/ Danger Pay (DSSR 500/540 and 650)



- Payable on temporary duty (TDY):
 - Post differential: May be paid to employee on TDY after 42 consecutive calendar days in hardship location(s) (DSSR 541).
 - Danger pay: May be paid to employee on TDY after four hours at danger pay location.





Difficult-To-Staff Incentive Differential (DSSR 1000)

- 15% of basic salary for hard-to-fill jobs at posts with at least 15% post differential.
 - Recruitment and retention incentive to fill overseas needs. (Commitment of three years is in DoS's implementation.)
 - Employing agency decides which jobs get DTSID.
 - Position-by-position, by occupational specialty, or post-by-post.





TQSA Pre-Departure (DSSR 120)

- Reimburses temporary lodging, meals, laundry/dry cleaning prior to departure after permanent quarters are vacated at foreign post (*this is the foreign-post subsistence piece of the two DSSR transfer allowances*)
- Pre-departure: up to 30 days, with one or two 30-day extensions
- Based upon per diem rate for the foreign post; reimbursement reduces over time



Home Service Transfer Allowance (DSSR 250)



- Helps to defray transfer costs from a foreign post to a post in the U.S.
- Three of four HSTA portions are identical to those under Foreign Transfer Allowance, already covered in this show:
 - Miscellaneous, Lease Penalty, and Wardrobe
- But rate basis and period of time for HSTA Subsistence Expense stand apart



HSTA Subsistence Expense Portion (DSSR 252.3)



- Two claim methods: Actual Expense Reimbursement and Fixed Amount Reimbursement (method available is up to each agency)
- Actual Expense method (used by DoS): Basis is standard CONUS per diem; 60 days routinely allotted, with amounts reducing in second month; additional 60 days may be granted on case-by-case basis





Resources - Allowances

- Office of Allowances Homepage:
aoprals.state.gov
- Allowance Rates by Type and Location
- Foreign Per Diem by Location
- *Standardized Regulations* (DSSR)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Contact information



Questions?

